

by Mike Pucci

A Reputation for EXCELLENCE

In their community and across the country, *Hoelck's Florist & Bouquets of Fruit* is the go-to source for quality

Strong reputations are earned with hard work and dedication—and in the Connecticut town of Waterford, Hoelck's is the name that is synonymous with a reputation for providing beautiful floral arrangements, delicious Fruit Bouquets and attentive personal service.

Hoelck's Florist & Bouquets of Fruit has been in business for more than 25 years and in addition to continually growing its walk-in sales from the local community and beyond, the shop is a top sender of orders through the BloomNet network.

Among the keys to Hoelck's success is a commitment to quality and to keeping the name of the business front and center. "It's all about branding. When a floral order goes out of here it doesn't just go out in a plain box, it has to have one of our gift tags on the front of the box," says Michael Hoelck, who with his wife Victoria, owns the shop. "Our customer could have gone anywhere. You want people to know that their order came from Hoelck's."

To help assure customer satisfaction, and drive repeat business, the shop always provides confirmation photos of the arrangements it delivers. The photo and related information then get stored in the shop's database. "If someone wants to order exactly what they ordered last time, we can pull it right up...we have gotten excellent responses to this approach," says Victoria.

The Hoelck's brand is further kept top-of-mind among local customers in Waterford and surrounding communities via a fleet of "mobile billboards." Five of the shop's delivery vans are adorned with a bright bow on top and ribbon on the side, transforming each van into a rolling gift vehicle. "The bow is made of aluminum, I made it myself with the help of a welder. And the ribbon is painted on the side of the vans," states Michael. "People love it, and they recognize our vehicles...in fact, we have actually had people comment to us that they are disappointed if a

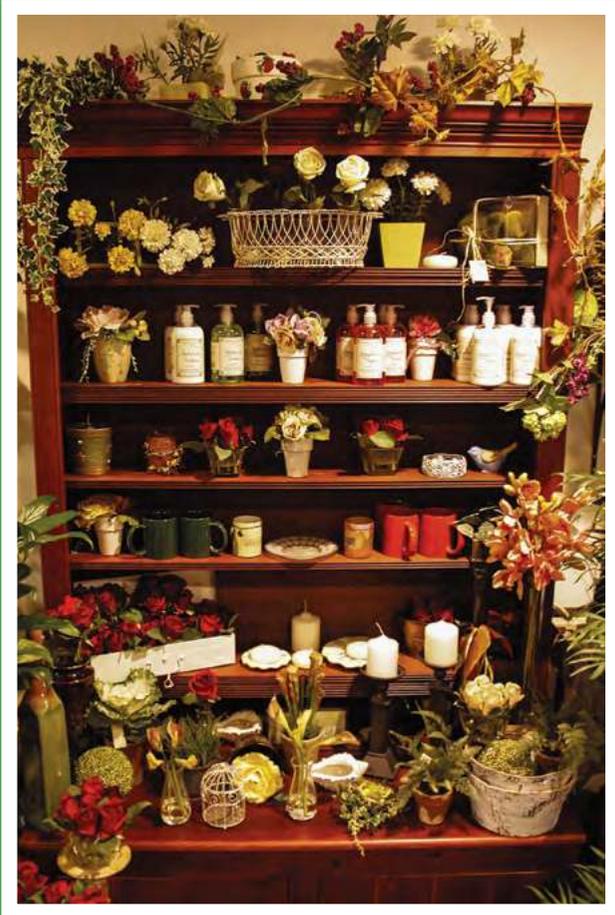


delivery arrives in one of our vans that does not have the ribbon on it."

Complementing the high visibility of the bow-and-ribbon-adorned vans are several marketing strategies at Hoelck's Florist & Bouquets of Fruit. Emails and postcards are key elements in the shop's promotional program. Also, customers receive specially-framed gift certificates as raffled door prizes during special events. In addition, the shop promotes its new Fruit Bouquets product line with brochures it acquires from BloomNet. The brochures are printed with the Hoelck's name on them. "We include the brochures with every floral arrangement, so customers know that Fruit Bouquets is a new item we carry...and response has been very good," says Victoria.

Offsite merchandising is part of the strategy as well. "We have a 16-door vending machine at Lawrence + Memorial Hospital in nearby New London, Connecticut," explains Michael. "We offer fresh floral arrangements in vases, as well as gift baskets and other items, at a variety of price points. The vending machine has been a nice addition to our business."

Also great for business at Hoelck's Florist & Bouquets of Fruit is the shop's highly talented staff. "Every member of the Hoelck's team gives it their all," sums up Victoria. "They are very proud of what they do and what we do as a whole. We truly are like family, every day." 🍌



FAST FACTS

Owners: Michael and Victoria Hoelck

Location: Waterford, Connecticut

Established: 1989

Employees: 9

